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Music Along the Rapidan

James A. Davis

MUSIC ALONG THE RAPIDAN

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Civil War Soldiers, Music, and Community during Winter Quarters, Virginia

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Set in ITC New Baskerville by Renni Johnson.

For Jenn
This one is for you, with love and thanks.

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Introduction

Civil War Music and Community

The Rappahannock's stately tide, aglow with sunset light,
Came sweeping down between the hills that hemmed its gathering might;
From one side rose the Stafford slopes, and on the other shore
The Spottsylvanian meadows lay—with oak groves scattered o'er.
Hushed were the sounds of busy day—the brooding air was hushed,
Save for the rapid flowing stream that chanted as it rushed.

—Opening lines of the poem "The Rappahannock" by Capt. C. H. Chamberlain, published in *Confederate Veteran* (1895).

On January 27, 1864, Luther Furst felt content. A signalman with the Union Sixth Corps near Brandy Station, Virginia, Furst and his messmates had finished building their shelter and could now boast of "excellent quarters & a splendid fireplace." A southern wind kept the temperature moderate enough that the ground was thawing and he and his comrades could forgo a fire during the day. All told it was "very warm and pleasant." Added to this restful setting was a gift no soldier would deny: "Tonight the 1st New Jersey Band serenaded the gen. and staff. They discoursed some very sweet music."[1] Furst's life as a soldier and the peculiar setting of his camp combined to make the sound of a military band a particularly satisfying aesthetic experience. This musical and personal transformation was something most soldiers experienced during the winter encampment of 1863–64 in central Virginia. As Lt. Samuel Porter of New

York confessed: "One of our bands plays every night and even I who have no particular musical taste cannot but be charmed. Music here sounds so differently."[2]

What was it that made music sound so "sweet" and "differently" for Furst and Porter? It was who they were, and where they were listening, as much as what they heard. *Music along the Rapidan* is predicated on two beliefs: that music was a particularly meaningful social process during the American Civil War and that the idea of community was central to Americans' worldview at this time. Together these ideas lead to two interrelated conclusions: that appreciating Civil War music requires understanding the social environments in which music occurred, and that understanding these social environments involves recognizing how a cultural icon like music contributed to the formation and expression of social identities that came to the fore during the war.

This work uses a twofold concept of community. The first might be deemed the traditional definition: to borrow from Patricia Beaver, a community is a social entity united through "a combination of elements linking geographically defined place, the daily lives and relationships of people, historical experiences, and shared values," although "shared values" must be mutable and multilayered given the coexistence of racially, economically, or ideologically divergent groups within a single community.[3] The second concept is drawn from Benedict Anderson's "imagined community," which he defined as a "deep, horizontal comradeship" based on ideological or behavioral affinities as opposed to interpersonal relations or spatial proximity.[4] Thus Civil War communities could be built around religion, ethnicity, or social class and exist within a traditionally defined community or reach beyond the immediate locale for a shared identity on a regional or national level. While terms other than "community" might have been chosen to refer to these multilevel social groups, the connotations and implications of "community" are especially relevant to this time.[5] Primary sources show that abstract or diffuse social groups were

often regarded with the intimacy normally associated with traditionally defined communities. That the idea of community is significant to nineteenth-century Americans, and Civil War Americans in particular, is reflected in the amount of research dedicated to the topic in recent years. In the words of historian Brenda Stevenson: "Family may have been at the center of one's connection to humanity, but community regularly competed for that privileged place."[6]

To unravel the complex functions of everyday music for Civil War soldiers requires a combination of what Anthony Seeger called an "anthropology of music" ("the way music is part of culture and social life") and a "musical anthropology" ("the way musical performances create many aspects of culture and social life").[7] *Music along the Rapidan* is not a study of musical communities per se but rather a study of socially and ideologically defined communities that are reaffirmed or contested through music. This attempt to position music within a network of communal identities was initially influenced by sociological interactionism and its variants.[8] It was then refined by exploring similar approaches from musicology and ethnomusicology that consider ways in which music serves as a nexus for social roles and how musical identities are reflexively shaped or projected through culturally determined practices.[9]

The abundance of musical topics from the time of the Civil War is a principal reason why this book focuses on a specific population in one location during a limited amount of time.[10] The winter encampment of 1863–64 in Virginia is a laboratory setting for a cultural historian; time and motion are momentarily suspended for the two armies, allowing for a deep and focused investigation not possible with other periods from the war. There are limits to such an approach, however. *Music along the Rapidan* was intended as a primary source study from its inception, yet the self-imposed constraints of time and place limited the material available for use. Drawing excessively broad conclusions from such a narrow pool runs the risk of oversimplifying or misrepresenting musical practice at the time. For

1. Soldiers literally mapped a new community onto the preexisting communities of central Virginia in the fall of 1863, such as this Union camp before Culpeper Court House. (Library of Congress)

example, surviving letters and diaries were often written by upper-class soldiers and civilians, so there is a constant danger of falsely projecting one set of values to encompass diverse populations. A similar situation is found regarding African American music at this time, an obviously important and rich topic that does not appear with any regularity in a majority of the sources consulted for this book. Finally, the ubiquity of music can work against it; music was so much a part of everyday life that it was easily overlooked in casual descriptions, leaving the minutiae of musical practices without detailed explanations.[11]

The unique setting and duration of the winter encampment intensified the emotional and social power of music just as it reinforced representative communal identities produced by the war. For five months the Army of Northern Virginia and the Army of the Potomac remained stationary, glaring at each other across the Rapidan River and totally disrupting the lives of those unfor-

tunate citizens who lived in the area. While no significant combat occurred, there were struggles of a different kind as soldiers and civilians sought to define their place within this disjointed social environment. Forcing distinct social groups to coexist for so long compelled the clarification of each group's identity. For a populace who defined themselves by their place within their communities, a war between contiguous social groups was collectively and personally traumatic. Musical practice was inseparable from this process at every step, a tangible manifestation of the personalities and beliefs of an entire country at war. Whether expressing private feelings, patriotic commitment, or spiritual conviction, musical performances allowed the participants to release a part of themselves that could be voiced in no other manner. In all cases the music chosen revealed a stratified diversity of tastes and socio-musical functions.

Music was an omnipresent and influential part of the soldier's world. At the mundane level the sounds of the fife, bugle, and drum were inseparable from military life; field musicians literally governed each soldier's daily routine. Regimental and brigade bands performed in ceremonial situations such as dress parade and guard mounting, providing an aesthetically pleasing element to what would normally be a pedestrian event. These sounds eventually entwined themselves with the men's perception of military life, creating an ironic love-hate relationship with military music that supported their transformation into professional soldiers. By no means were the troops limited to official musical performances, however. Bands frequently offered serenades and concerts, and the soldiers were certainly capable of providing their own music when no bands were around. Cherished activities included singing with messmates and playing a guitar or fiddle around the evening campfire. Such informal performances grew remarkably advanced given the variety of talents found within the armies. A surprising number of unofficial organized ensembles and performances appeared in both Union and Confederate camps, including glee clubs, string bands, and even fully staged minstrel shows.

Culpeper and Orange Counties, unwilling hosts of the winter encampment, retained a small but resilient civilian population, and access to the railroad allowed both armies to enjoy a steady stream of civilian visitors. Music formed a basis of communication between these contrasting yet codependent populations; each could define the other by their music, and both seemed eager to experience the musical world of the other. Not surprisingly, the local civilians used their music in different ways when dealing with soldiers in either blue or gray, though there were several examples of bipartisan performances wherein music transcended the conflict and momentarily united the two sides. Music can divide as well as unite, however, and patriotic music was used to underscore the political wedge separating the warring parties, while highbrow musical events reminded both soldiers and civilians that class divisions remained despite the disrupted social order. Music also played a key role in the religious lives of soldiers and civilians. Each Sunday the camps were filled with hymns and sacred songs from a variety of denominations, while local churches staunchly struggled to maintain their divine services. The revivalist movement that swept through the camps was accompanied by musical sounds that probably represented the most bipartisan repertory at this time.

The distinctive circumstances surrounding the winter encampment of 1863–64 forced the interaction of musical and social worlds alike, and the power of music increased exponentially through the integration and opposition of these communities. Performing music was an effective means of celebrating one's communal identity, but during the winter encampment it became a primary tool in the formation of that identity. Music could signify community boundaries when other boundaries had been negated. Musical instruments, ensembles, and pieces became symbols of their respective populations: the brass band, bugle, and march "belong" to the soldier, while the piano and waltz "belong" to the civilian. In Orange and Culpeper Counties these sounds were willingly and forcibly exchanged between communities. There was music that would be new to each pop-

ulation; reveille was not something that was normally heard by a resident of Orange Court House, while a plantation work song would be a new sound for a soldier from Maine. Each of these pieces, whether previously known or newly experienced, was heard differently by each distinct audience. A Union band's rendition of "John Brown's Body" would receive widely different receptions were it heard by Union soldiers, Confederate soldiers, local citizens, or visitors from home. Any musical performance within the confines of the winter encampment became an issue of identity, though relationships between competing identities shifted due to the duration of the encampment. Easily defined communal boundaries—North vs. South, soldier vs. civilian—could even become temporarily blurred when participating with a musical work. Past communities might compete with contested lived communities, or loyalties previously undetected might emerge in the course of the aesthetic experience. Music brought together the past and the present, blending prior standards and perspectives with the current necessities of life during wartime.

When these musical genres and practices are viewed in total, what emerges is a network of interlocking communities that appropriated certain musical repertories as part of their defining rituals. Every soldier had an idiosyncratic musical background that included favorite songs, preferred instruments, recognized styles, even assumptions as to how and when music was suitable. All of these distinctive backgrounds were forced to coexist within the ranks even as the plurality was subsumed and reshaped under a military musical framework. This newly formed socio-military entity was then implanted in the rural setting of the Virginia Piedmont. Music became a touchstone as these communities collided. Performing and listening to music provided ideal representations of the various worlds each soldier and civilian occupied as well as tools for restructuring those subjective and objective environments. The influx of new social, geographic, professional, and ethnic musical cultures into the long-standing musical society of Orange and Culpeper

Counties resembled a musical conquest. The town should have sounded different from the camp, but it was impossible to keep the two musical communities separate.

This clash of musical styles epitomized the social turmoil that Union and Confederate citizen-soldiers experienced during the war. Civil War music embodied the central political, ethical, and spiritual issues for which both sides were fighting. In this sense it can be seen as intensifying sectional differences, yet ultimately it helped to heal the fractures that appeared in this young country's democratic ideals. While music may not be credited for altering strategy or winning battles, in some way it was connected to all aspects of Civil War life. To understand the musical practices of soldiers and civilians during the winter encampment of 1863–64 is to glimpse the innermost processes at work in the participants, the human factor that drew people together and enabled them to survive the greatest tragedy they would ever face.

Music and the Soundscape of War

Hearing was critical to the cognitive organization of the Civil War environment. Just as the damage caused by an exploding cannon shell altered the visual landscape, the sounds of the cannon firing and the shell exploding radically altered the sonic environment. This modification of the soundscape within the theater of war deformed the inhabitants' perception of, and resulting attitude toward, the area in which they were living as much as the visually apparent physical devastation. This was painfully true of an area like central Virginia. The quiet, regulated atmosphere of the village and farm were symbolic of the lifestyle for which many Confederates were fighting. Soundscapes, just like ideology, separated the agrarian South from the industrialized North, at least in the minds of many of the participants.[12]

The symbolic and material contrast between the sounds of peace and war was severe and fraught with meaning. In July 1861 Louisa Minor of Albemarle County shared her fears in her

2. Two soldiers enjoy the view from a hill overlooking Culpeper. There was no way that the tranquil sights and sounds of this pastoral area could survive the invasion of two massive and noisy armies. (National Archives and Records Administration)

diary: "So many people imagine they hear the guns at Manassas and our hearts fail when we think of the fate of the many there, who are near and dear to us."[13] Louisa and her neighbors found the distant sounds frightening in their implication, yet when the war suddenly appeared on their doorsteps, such sounds became dreadfully revealing. Following the Battle of Cedar Mountain (August 9, 1862), the locals heard not only the destructive sounds of combat, but also the horrifying echo of its aftermath, as thousands of wounded and dying men filled the air with cries for help and water.

Mary Dulany of Fauquier County described the intrusion of the sounds of war into her world, yet her calm tone is revealing in a different way: "I was mistaken in supposing the firing had ended. A strong north wind prevented me hearing it. As soon as the wind lulled, we heard it again, constantly till after the sun went down—At times it seemed more distant but that may have been the difference in the size of the guns."[14] The ana-

lytic manner of this description implies that Mary had successfully adapted her perceptions to include the sounds of war as part of her new environment. Mary managed to interpret the sounds as well, having learned to sift through the noise and to attach meaning to what she heard. Alansa Rounds Sterrett of Augusta County read a great deal into the new sounds she heard: "We could tell at night by the sound whether the troops passing along the streets were on the saddles of the Yanks, as they squeaked like new and the thud and tramp of the cavalry horses proclaimed their well shod steeds—while the poor Johnny Rebs made a very different impression in their turn."[15]

Adapting one's auditory perspective to accept such intrusive sounds (while still resenting their presence) was necessary. These sounds were an unavoidable part of daily life in a war zone. To adopt the noise of war into one's auditory schema was a means of coping with the potentially overwhelming significance of such sounds, for there was no denying that these were the sounds of death. Lemuel Corbin, like many other soldiers, chose metaphor to help make sense of the sounds he heard during a skirmish: "The Yankees were within 70 yards of us shooting rapidly and the balls making any other than pleasant music to us."[16] Corbin's use of a musical metaphor was significant in many ways. To impose musical imagery on the sound of fighting was a way to impose comprehensible structure onto the sound. The firing of guns and cannon, the shouting of men, and the rumbling of horses all created aural chaos. Resorting to a musical comparison put some type of form onto the sound. Controlling how such sounds were heard, or even what was heard, no matter how small or trivial the sound, could be extremely important for the sanity of the participants.[17]

While the soldiers and civilians may not have been able to stop the noise, with music they could control one small part of their sensory world. A piece of music became a buffer between the listener and the sounds of war. It could block undesirable sounds, or at least provide distraction from the unending racket. Yet music's aesthetic potential simultaneously empowered the

listeners. Music is a definitive means of controlling the sonic environment; it is the ultimate organization of sound and hence the antithesis of noise.[18] Rhythm is by its very nature the ordering of sound in time, while the use of specific pitches in recognizable sequences provides cognitive structures that help shape temporal space. What is more, music is manifestly intentional. Performing and listening to music are conscious, directed processes that require the participation of both producers and receivers. Hearing a piece of music *as* music is therefore hearing organization, produced locally, for a local audience, for an immediate purpose. The performer and listener are linked immediately in a process over which they have control. They are active agents, harnessing one part of their environment for their own purposes.[19]

Through music Civil War soldiers and civilians regained control of at least one portion of their environment, reconstructing something that was fundamentally pleasing in opposition to the negativity that surrounded them.[20] Music became a means of shaping the material and emotional environment. According to sociologist Tia DeNora, music is "part of the cultural material through which 'scenes' are constructed, scenes that afford different kinds of agency, different sorts of pleasure and ways of being." Such processes may be conscious or not and carry with them connotative meanings that are discernible in both the inner worlds of the listener and performer as well as the physical world surrounding the participants. Music channels how we feel, how we move, and how we view ourselves. In addition, marching and dancing are physical manifestations of this musical sculpting, structuring space as well as a time while simultaneously imparting social significance to the movements.[21]

Civil War Communities

Conflict during the Civil War was not limited to the battlefield. Battles of a different sort occurred in churches and schools, at home and on the street. It truly was a war that pitted brother against brother and neighbor against neighbor; it was an ide-

ological, economic, political, and religious war that reached deep into private life. For some it was a holy crusade, whereas for others it was merely the defense of one's home from foreign invaders. Perhaps more than any other conflict in world history, the Civil War was a clash of communities. Entire neighborhoods banded together to form companies, while towns anxiously read the local papers to hear the latest of their boys at the front. Yet it was a clash of more than geographically bounded social groups. It was a war of personal-communal identity as well, and any attempt to understand the social impact of the war must take into account the various social groups operating at this time, be they large or small, exclusive or inclusive, illusory or material.[22] Nineteenth-century Americans were members of multiple interlocking tangible or imagined communities, each of which fostered self-impressions upon which men and women based their lives. Not only were the proclaimed causes of the war such that they triggered polarization between predetermined macro-communities (North vs. South, Democrats vs. Whigs), the inherent volatility of civil war in general led to divisions at the micro-social level as well. There was no middle ground at this time; everyone had to commit, and their choices largely defined their place within society's shifting hierarchy.[23]

Antebellum American communities began in the home and spiraled out. The family was the centripetal group, establishing and developing identities by social class, ethnicity, gender, and faith. Then came the neighborhood or town, in many ways an extension of the family group, where an individual's private values were publically refined through social networks.[24] Beyond that were the imagined communities, groups who conceived of themselves as joined together in some way beyond spatially dependent interpersonal relationships. These included communal identification with the county, region, state, and ultimately the warring geopolitical entities: North and South, or Union and Confederacy. People were also linked through political partisanship, religious denomination, social rank, gender, and occupational identity. The result was an overlapping net-

work of actual and imagined communities, all of which factored into an individual's self-perception and all of which spoke through music.

Communities are defined both by what the members hold in common and by what separates them from others.[25] Communities have boundaries, marked by geography, race, language, religion, or any other number of factors real or manufactured. While the testing of these boundaries often leads to conflict, it is the interaction between differentiated social groups that ultimately clarifies communities. During the Civil War this process of communal definition occurred in everyday reality between extant social groups; but it also happened within individuals struggling to locate themselves socially and ideologically. Each of these personal communities, these group allegiances, could wax and wane in terms of conscious or unconscious influence. One community loyalty might predominate at a given time, especially if it coincided in purpose or value with current events or an individual's particular desire or fortune at that moment. When a conflict of communal identity occurred within an individual, as often happened during the war, the result could be agonizing. For those caught up in the war's fluctuating and violent tides, survival required a reckoning with the social environment just as much as the physical environment. You needed to know who you were, what you believed, and with whom you were aligned. Emotional stability required that one's potentially conflicting belief systems were balanced in some way and that one's personal communal attachments did not compete too much with each other.

Sometimes communal identities not only overlapped but also synchronized in concept and purpose. Confederate soldiers, for example, increasingly linked their sense of national obligation with the defense and maintenance of their homes and lifestyles.[26] For others, however, the personal or public communities conflicted at some point. Allegiance to the state might mean abandoning a commitment to the (previous) nation, while joining a neighborhood regiment might go against a fam-

ily's religious values. This network of communal interactions was extremely complex. In some households, fathers and sons enlisted together, while in others, brothers ended up fighting against each other. Even what seem at first to be clear communal boundaries will fragment under the pressure of competing communal agendas.[27] When considering the winter encampment of 1863–64, certain communal identities were particularly significant to the soldiers and civilians living in the Piedmont region of Virginia. These communities were defined by time and occupation as well as geography, and each could be experienced or manufactured: the past community (including each person's social background and memories of life before the war); the lived community (distinguished between the soldier and civilian populations, at home and at the front); and the imagined communities (constructed through regional patriotism, nationalism, class, race, and religion.)

Music and Civil War Communities

Music was a social experience during the Civil War. Both performers and listeners actively participated in bringing music to life and granting it meaning. Performers were active agents, establishing sonic and emotional order on the environment and creating the means for interaction with listeners. Musical performances were layered over the sonic garbage of camp life, pushing the noise of war to the background while foregrounding emotionally rich and socially participatory sounds. Listening, on the other hand, was a form of passive agency. Music requires the listener to process the event within its intended usage. Yet soldiers (and civilians) were not always able to pick and choose what music they heard or at what times. Reveille woke the soldiers every morning despite their strong desire to stay asleep. Still, the aesthetic nature of music allows the listener some measure of agency despite their inability to control the source. Many soldiers considered Taps a beautiful piece even though it served as a command for the troops to go to sleep. And while soldiers could not stop hearing a piece they did not

like or want to hear, they could stop listening, thereby denying some measure of constituency to the piece of music. In a more casual situation, soldiers and civilians had the ability to leave if they were hearing someone sing a song they did not appreciate; even the sounds of bands were limited in their range. By choosing to listen, however, the listener fulfilled music's function and granted it meaning.

Above the individual, unidirectional act of listening or performing, the combined process of making music —what Christopher Small called *musicking*—created a situation that fostered participatory communal organization as well. Singing along with friends became a means of structuring one's relationship with others. Performing was giving, listening was accepting, and participating was sharing. This was as true of the regimental band performing at dress parade as it was with the enlisted man playing his guitar for his messmates. Through music, these participants were engaging in an aesthetic process with the potential for shared emotional stimulation as well as communication at a number of levels. Through musicking, soldiers and civilians were able to define their relationship to those around them, and likewise to impose themselves emotionally, socially and sonically on their environment. Music was as much a process as a product during the Civil War.

Music thus provided a social equivalent to the organization of noise, namely, the organization of community units. In the same way music added structure to each individual's chaotic sensory environment, so too did music help identify, reinforce, and celebrate that person's relationships with those around them. Music served as an "affordance structure" that allowed for reflexive, interactive encounters that mirrored cultural order and disciplined the immediate society.[28] This was readily apparent in the content of music, as when the lyrics of a song professed distinct values held by a particular group of people. Yet it was true of the process of performing music as well. Civil War musicking involved culturally derived routines, rituals, expectations, and behaviors that defined and delineated communities.

Social anthropologist Ruth Finnegan described such routines as a "musical pathway," a pattern of symbolic constructs and practices "which both creates and differentiates social activity—one arena in which people thus manifest and experience their social reality."[29] These pathways were challenged and strengthened during the Civil War. Music and war have a synergetic relationship; just as warfare manipulates the ways in which musical styles evolve, music in turn becomes an influential tool for both militarization and opposition.[30]

Past and present, lived and imagined, music substantiated all of these communal identities. Each social unit, and the individuals within these units, constructed what Josh Kun called *audiotopias*: "small, momentary lived utopias built, imagined, and sustained through sound, noise, and music."[31] The social instability brought about by the Civil War increased the need for communal definition, while the forced migration of bonded social units insured that these communities were constantly interacting. As musicologist Deane Root noted: "Thus to view the music of the era in terms of a nation, a city, a regiment, an ethnic group, or a trade . . . mirrors the ways in which those musicians and audiences lived their own lives and viewed their activities as taking place within their multiple communities." Music still functioned in more traditional ways, providing entertainment and emotional solace, disseminating propaganda, and so on. But defining community identities through music was neither accidental nor insignificant, for composers, performers, and listeners were well aware of the social implications of their art and the role it played in community formation.[32]

Participating with any piece of music was participating with a community, though how one heard the piece or used the performance was dependent upon community affiliation. Historian Mark Smith noted how "particular constituencies constructed the soundscapes of the Civil War differently. There were, in effect, multiple acoustic battlefields and home fronts during the war."[33] Whether meant to be combative or collaborative, the reception of a piece may or may not have aligned with the

intended performance. Listeners as agents used music in ways that were determined by their perspective or goals, enough so that a single musical performance could serve different communities in different ways. As a result, the musical world of the winter encampment simultaneously manifested Kay Kaufman Shelemay's continuum of musical communities, including those collectives united by "descent" (shared identities), "dissent" (opposition to an existing collective), and "affinity."[34] So even as musical performances were briefly uniting purported enemies, battles were taking place in musical space that mirrored the conflict in the material world. Both sides gleefully battered their opponents with patriotic music, while some officers used their bands as tools in the subjugation of the civilian population. In addition, almost all the music generated by the soldier and civilian populations inadvertently or intentionally excluded the African American community even though it was this community that lay at the heart of the conflict.

Musical Meaning and Community Identity

The average soldier was defined by numerous overlapping communities, and each of these collectives shared a musical identity. One soldier could be an officer, originally from a large urban area along the east coast, unmarried, and a Harvard graduate. Another soldier could be a private from a small farming community in the Midwest, a devout Christian, with a large family waiting for him at home. Each of these personal characteristics linked these soldiers to a larger community associated with music. Specific pieces of music would be heard differently depending upon the community affiliation. The Harvard graduate might have heard the "Dead March" from Handel's oratorio *Saul* in its original form when living in Boston; to hear this piece at a military funeral might remind him of his past community. The farmer from Illinois may have never heard any of Handel's music priorto his first military funeral; the result would be an exotic, almost mystical experience. Yet the longer both men remained in the army and heard this piece at funerals, the closer

their interpretations would grow, as their increasing identification with the military community shaped each man's hearing.

While iconic pieces of music had existed for each of these men's communities prior to the war, during their time in the army, and especially during the winter encampment, these pieces were forcibly intermingled in such a way as to test their original identificatory power. New pieces were received with an associative intensity far greater than previously known music due to the traumas of the battlefield in conjunction with the significant causes that had triggered the war. The hermeneutic authority that the war imprinted on the soldiers guaranteed that musical meanings acquired during their years in uniform superseded previous meanings and would last long after the war had ended.

Musical meaning during the winter encampment was negotiated between location, function, and audience. Some pieces had very specific meanings that worked only in restricted audiences or settings, such as "The Star-Spangled Banner." Other pieces managed to cross between audiences or to suit different locations with ease. A tune like "Listen to the Mockingbird" had been a favorite of many Americans prior to the war and remained entertaining in its new setting. Whether performed by a band or a solo singer, "Mockingbird" was enjoyed by civilians and soldiers, officers and enlisted men, Northerners and Southerners. Other compositions were more complex in their reception. An antebellum piece like "The Girl I Left Behind Me" was transformed from a harmless dance tune into a ceremonial march for the soldiers, while civilians would still hear the piece in its original context. Patriotic tunes might have begun with a very specific charge, but circumstances changed how even they were received. "Dixie" started as a minstrel tune, was adopted as an informal national anthem, then ended up being enjoyed by both Yankee and Rebel soldiers, indicating the occupational community of soldiers who connected with any music by a military band. Such patriotic pieces could trigger a much different reaction in civilians; while soldiers took the pieces as representative of their new lived community, many

3. Two Union soldiers pose for the camera, each with his characteristic instrument of war. (Library of Congress)

civilians would hold onto a tune's original divisive intentions. Some pieces even triggered opposing reactions within an individual, as when religious hymns simultaneously provided spiritual comfort and the pain of homesickness.

The meaning of specific compositions was certainly significant to the participants. Yet the act of musicking itself–including

performing, listening, the setting, and any ritualistic behaviors accompanying the performance–was equally if not more significant. Civilians could find comfort from hearing a certain piece, but it was often the social experience inherent in the process of making music that provided the most immediate comfort. Civilian music served as a buffer between their world and that of the soldiers; it also proved an anchor to the past community free of the stench of war. Musical performances within the soldier's world were equally critical to their self-identity and to their view of those around them. The soldier's music, however, went one step further in that it contributed to the formation of a new communal identity. In addition, the aesthetic attraction of music made it a positive emblem of the new life adopted by the soldiers. Such was the case for Capt. Samuel Craig of the 105th Pennsylvania Infantry:

> But army life, from enlistment to discharge, while it includes sickness, suffering, deprivations and other things of the unattractive side mentioned above, has its other and brighter side. . . . I have enjoyed sleep with my knapsack for a pillow, the cool soft zepherlike breezes on my face, with the wonder stars and moon looking down; the many varied sounds, and "songs in the night"; the hearty laugh, shouts or songs of our men in their tents; the tattoo of the artillery and cavalry buglers ringing clear and sweet, now near, and then far off over the hills, mingled with the shrill fife and the rattle and rub-a-dub-dub, of the drums; and later when the great stir of the camps about is over, all silent as the winkling stars, and the soft light of the moon steals over our bare heads, there comes . . . the fine serenade of the Headquarters brass band, so delightful to the tired soldier resting on the broad of his back.[35]

As with so many other soldiers, the sounds of a military encampment, and particularly music, were woven into the very heart of Craig's description. Music was not only inseparable from his vision of army life but it was also symbolic of the professional life he was proud to have lived. He fondly recalled all types of

military music: not just the bands playing serenades or the soldiers singing, but also the field musicians who had militantly ordered his day. In addition, it was not the singular content or meaning of any of this music that captured Craig so much as who was performing, why they were playing, and where the music was being heard. For Craig, this music was his army. Unlike any other process used to create communal bonds within the army, music was the only activity that could quickly, effectively, and permanently form community by itself. Making music was a ritual that immediately established a social group. The reiteration of musical performances, especially in conjunction with other activities, made it a force unlike any other at this time. Perhaps this is what led Robert E. Lee to state: "I don't believe we can have an army without music."[36]

Music was inseparable from community for the civilians and soldiers living in the Virginia Piedmont during the winter encampment. It recalled past communities, created lived communities, and strengthened imagined communities. Specific types of music served different communal functions. Military music broadcast martial intentions while inculcating a new professional perspective onto the men. Traditional music spoke of the past community, the safe world of the civilian, and the happy times before the war. Religious music drew together the chorus of believers into an imagined community that transcended other lived communities. Formal dance music reminded soldiers from both armies that social hierarchies remained in place despite their shared goals. Yet every person involved in the winter encampment was a member of multiple collectives. Overlapping communities meant that music could migrate from one social setting to another, making the content or purpose of individual pieces less significant than the situation in which the piece was performed. Ultimately it was the transformation within each individual, and especially the soldiers, that dictated what roles specific pieces of music would play during the winter encampment and throughout the entire war.